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Twenty-ninth session
10-14 February 1997
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Provisional agenda

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3. Critical problems in economic statistics.
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10. Finance statistics.
11. Demographic and social statistics:
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12. Technical cooperation in statistics.

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14. World statistics day.

15. Programme questions and related matters.

16. Provisional agenda for the thirtieth session of the Commission.

17. Report of the Commission on its twenty-ninth session.

Annotations

1. Election of officers

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure and past practice, the Statistical Commission will elect, at its first meeting, a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur to serve from the beginning of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission to the beginning of the thirtieth session.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The items on the provisional agenda and the corresponding documentation were considered by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session (New York, 27 February-3 March 1995) 1/ and approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1995/239. The Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination reviewed the provisional agenda and documentation at its eighteenth session (New York, 16-18 April 1996), and made a number of decisions, which are reflected in the present provisional agenda and documentation (see E/CN.3/1997/19, paras. 31 (d), 33 (c) and 48-50).

Documentation

Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.3/1997/1)

Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the work of the session (E/CN.3/1997/L.1)

Note by the Secretariat on the state of preparation of documentation for the session (E/CN.3/1997/L.2)

3. Critical problems in economic statistics

The Commission will have before it the revised report of the Expert Group on Critical Problems in Economic Statistics, in which the Expert Group identifies the critical issues and makes proposals on how to deal with them. The original report of the Expert Group (E/CN.3/AC.1/1996/R.13, annex) was submitted to the Commission's Working Group at its eighteenth session. That report has been revised to reflect amendments and extensions suggested by the Working Group (see E/CN.3/1997/19, paras. 21-27).

The Commission will also have before it a report combining the reports of a number of informal consultation groups on the issues identified. Previously existing groups will provide progress and status reports for information; newly formed groups will present their proposed terms of reference for consideration by the Commission. As requested by the Working Group, the report will also include the draft terms of reference for a comprehensive evaluation of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) that have been developed by the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank, in consultation with countries. The Commission will be requested to decide whether the comprehensive evaluation of ICP should proceed.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on Critical Problems in Economic Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/2)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the ad hoc study groups established by the Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination (E/CN.3/1997/3)

4. International economic and social classifications

The Commission will have before it a report on the current work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division on international economic and social classifications, covering (a) the leadership and coordination of a strategic plan of action for further work on international economic and social classifications, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Expert Group on International Classifications at its second meeting (New York, 24-26 June 1996); (b) the further development of the International Classifications Database through the implementation of the Classifications Hot Line (CHL), as well as the design and preparation of a classifications inventory; (c) further development of the correspondences between the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3) and ISIC, Rev.2; and (d) further work on the draft revised list of products and materials for the collection of commodity production statistics (PRODCOM), including its coordination with the revision of the goods part of the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC).

The Commission will also have before it the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics on the draft revision of the provisional CPC (services part). The report will also contain a proposal for the revision and publication of the goods part of the provisional CPC to bring it into line with the changes made in the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS), effective 1 January 1996. The draft text of the revised CPC (services part) will be before the Commission for its views and possible adoption.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications (E/CN.3/1997/4)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics on the revised provisional Central Product Classification (E/CN.3/1997/5)

Draft revised Central Product Classification (services part) (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/77/Rev.1)

5. Environment statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on Environment Statistics, which will contain information on planned activities and priorities in the areas of environment statistics, indicators and accounting.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Environment Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/6)

6. Service statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on Service Statistics, which will inform the Commission that the Task Force has compiled an inventory of activities and requirements in the field of trade-in-services statistics; the inventory covers all the international institutions concerned and will be updated regularly. The Task Force concludes that it is not feasible at the present time to produce a worldwide yearbook on trade in services. It suggests that the planned manual on trade in services be produced in two stages: a preliminary draft for discussion at the Task Force meeting in February 1997, and thereafter a revised draft for circulation to national compilers for their input. The Commission will be asked to review the recommendations on future arrangements for work in this area.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Service Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/7)

7. Industrial and construction statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics, which will contain information on planned activities and priorities in the areas of industrial and construction statistics.

The Commission will also have before it a report on the revision of the International Recommendations for Construction Statistics, covering the preparatory work done to revise the Recommendations, as well as the differences between the existing recommendations and the proposed revisions. The draft revised recommendations will be before the Commission for its views and possible adoption.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/8)

Report of the Secretary-General on the revised recommendations for construction statistics (E/CN.3/1997/9)

Draft revised international recommendations for construction statistics (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/47/Rev.1)

8. International trade statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, which will review the work accomplished by the Task Force in response to the decisions made by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session 2/ and by the Working Group at its eighteenth session (see E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 11), as well as other activities that the Task Force has undertaken. The Commission will also have before it a report covering preparatory work on revised concepts and definitions for international trade statistics, as well as the work and conclusions of the Expert Group on the Revision of the United Nations Concepts and Definitions for International Trade Statistics, which was convened in New York from 20 to 24 May 1996. The draft revised concepts and definitions will be before the Commission for its views and possible adoption.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/10)

Report of the Secretary-General on revised concepts and definitions for international trade statistics (E/CN.3/1997/11)

Draft revised concepts and definitions for international merchandise trade statistics (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/52/Rev.2)

9. National accounts

The Commission will have before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), containing a definition of milestones for monitoring progress in the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA). The report will also assess the state of implementation of the 1993 SNA in individual countries, including their needs for technical support and resources for further implementation. A range of implementation targets to be pursued at the global and regional levels will be formulated for the Commission to consider. Finally, the report will review the support activities offered by ISWGNA members, in particular the status of the various language versions of the 1993 SNA.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (E/CN.3/1997/12)

10. Finance statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics, which concludes that the problems of overlapping and duplication in reporting data by countries to international organizations are limited. The report will also review the process of harmonizing the specialized statistical systems maintained by the International Monetary Fund (Balance of Payments Manual, Manual on Monetary and Financial Statistics and Manual on Government

Finance Statistics) with 1993 SNA standards. The Commission will be invited to consider whether or not further work of the Task Force is needed.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics (E/CN.3/1997/13)

11. Demographic and social statistics

(a) 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme

The Commission will have before it a progress report on the work undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat to revise the principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses. Revisions to the recommendations are proposed in the planning, organization and administration of population and housing censuses, with regard to census mapping; census data quality control; data processing; census evaluation; databases and data dissemination; and the application of geographical information systems (GIS) to population and housing censuses. Revisions in the topics to be investigated in population censuses include household and family statistics; fertility and mortality; educational characteristics; economic characteristics; statistics on gender; and statistics on disabled persons. In addition, revision in the topics to be investigated in housing censuses are proposed. For the first time, proposals are made for ways to use censuses to follow up international conferences. The draft revised principles and recommendations will be before the Commission for its views and possible adoption.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the preparation of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme (E/CN.3/1997/14)

Draft revised principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.1)

(b) Demographic, social and migration statistics

The Commission will have before it a progress report on demographic, social and migration statistics, which will review work being undertaken in the current biennium by the United Nations Statistics Division on civil registration and vital statistics; the Demographic Yearbook and its related database; human settlements and city statistics; crime statistics; gender statistics; disability statistics; and migration statistics. The report will describe the process of revising the recommendations on statistics of international migration, summarizing its core conceptual framework. The draft revised recommendations on statistics of international migration will be before the Commission for its views and possible adoption.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics (E/CN.3/1997/15)

Draft revised recommendations on statistics of international migration (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/58/Rev.1)

(c) Statistical implications of recent major United Nations conferences

At its twenty-eighth session, the Commission established the Expert Group on the Statistical Implications of Recent Major United Nations Conferences to recommend further work in this field. At its eighteenth session, the Working Group of the Commission agreed that the report of the Expert Group should be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session, and recommended that the Commission adopt the minimum national social data set, as contained in paragraph 97 of that report (E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 31 (b)).

The Commission will also have before it a report on progress in regional pilot studies on the availability and quality of the statistics called for in the minimum national social data set, and, to the extent possible, a synthesis of the regional results, identifying reporting mechanisms and approaches that might be useful in all regions, as requested by the Working Group (E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 31 (d)).

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on the Statistical Implications of Recent Major United Nations Conferences (E/CN.3/1997/16)

Report of the Secretary-General synthesizing regional pilot studies on the availability and quality of social statistics (E/CN.3/1997/17)

12. Technical cooperation in statistics

The Commission will have before it a report on technical cooperation activities in statistics, which will review the results of a survey of technical cooperation in statistics that was conducted by sending letters to international agencies, donor countries and recipient countries. The report will also review crucial issues pertinent to the question of technical cooperation.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics (E/CN.3/1997/18)

13. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes

The Commission will have before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its eighteenth session (New York, 16-18 April 1996), containing the outcome of the Working Group's

review of the implications for statistics of the United Nations financial crisis; the implementation of the 1993 SNA; the work of the inter-agency task forces; critical problems in economic statistics; the statistical implications of United Nations summit meetings; international classifications; technical cooperation in statistics; the role of the regional commissions; the coordination of statistical data-collection activities; gender-related topics for inclusion in national publications; statistical support for policy analysis issues at the international level; the holding of a world statistics day; and the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

The Commission will also have before it the reports of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on its twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions (Geneva, 15, 16 and 19 June 1995, and New York, 7-9 May 1996). The reports contain the outcomes of the Subcommittee's review of many aspects of the coordination of international statistical activities, including several matters that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission.

Relevant matters taken up at the twenty-ninth session of the Subcommittee are issues related to the work of the task forces, including coordination at the regional level; the improvement of coordination tools; needs for statistics of the analytical and policy units of international organizations and the statistics produced by those organizations; the coordination of follow-up for statistical activities related to international conferences; monitoring the implementation of recommended classifications in countries; the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development; the integration of the work of ad hoc groups in international work on statistical development; bilateral technical cooperation in statistics; the coordination of ongoing statistical programmes; the follow-up to the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission; the possible holding of a world statistics day; the report of the Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections; and communication by electronic mail (e-mail).

Relevant matters taken up at the thirtieth session of the Subcommittee are the 2000 Population and Housing Census Programme; migration statistics; communication by e-mail; the statistics part of the ACC programme classification; new developments relating to coordination tools and the uses of the coordination tools in the work of the Subcommittee; new data collection, processing and dissemination; new development, revision and implementation of standards; technical cooperation in statistics; coordination of the follow-up of statistical activities relating to international conferences; the United Nations Common Data Systems Task Force; issues related to the work of the task forces; critical problems in economic statistics; statistical support for policy analysis issues at the international level; the possible holding of a world statistics day; the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission; the ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections; and the United Nations Economic and Social Information System.

The Commission will have before it a report prepared jointly by the regional commissions, which will outline their views on strengthening their role in the statistical work of the United Nations and international agencies.

The Commission will also have before it a report prepared by an ad hoc study group, comprised of Australia, Brazil, the Netherlands, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will review the efforts made by the Statistical Commission, its Working Group, the international organizations and countries to strengthen international statistical cooperation since the twenty-second session of the Commission (4-13 February 1991). 3/

The Commission will have before it a report containing an overall assessment of the results of the task force initiative that was undertaken by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, 4/ with respect to the terms of reference of the task forces. The report will review the mandates, functioning and achievements to date of the task forces.

The Commission will also have before it a report on the adequacy and usefulness of the inventory of statistical data-collection activities, a tool developed for coordination of the statistical data-collection activities of the international organizations. The report is available both in printed form and as a machine-readable database, and will also review major changes in the data-collection activities of the organizations.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its eighteenth session (E/CN.3/1997/19)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its twenty-ninth session (E/CN.3/1997/20)*

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirtieth session (E/CN.3/1997/21)*

Report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of the regional commissions in statistics (E/CN.3/1997/22)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of an ad hoc study group on the review of the efforts aimed at strengthening international statistical cooperation since 1992 (E/CN.3/1997/23)

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* The reports of the Subcommittee are also relevant to discussion under agenda items 3-12 and 14.

Report of the Secretary-General assessing the work of the inter-agency task forces established by the Statistical Commission in relation to their mandates (E/CN.3/1997/24)

Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data-collection activities (E/CN.3/1997/25)

14. World statistics day

At its eighteenth session, the Statistical Commission's Working Group had before it a note by the Secretary-General containing summary results of a survey conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division (E/CN.3/AC.1/1996/R.11). The survey inquired of countries whether they celebrated a national statistics day, the objectives and methods of such a celebration, and their opinions and suggestions concerning a world statistics day. The note also recorded the view expressed by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities that, while it recognized the value of national statistical days in those countries that had them, it (the Subcommittee) had reservations about the potential value of and support for holding a world statistics day, especially in the light of the resources needed and the absence of well-developed objectives. The Working Group requested the Statistics Division to revise the note to reflect the range of views expressed during its discussion and submit the revised note to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session (E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 47); the revised note will be before the Commission.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the possible holding of a World Statistics Day (E/CN.3/1997/26)

15. Programme questions and related matters

The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division will make an oral report on significant developments that have occurred since the various substantive reports for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission were completed; he will also report on any important developments in the areas not covered in the agenda of the current session.

The Commission will have before it a report on the plans of international organizations in the field of statistics. The report will cover new additions to, and major changes in, existing plans for the various relevant plan periods of the international organizations.

The Commission will also have before it a note on the draft programme of work of the Statistics Division for the 1998-1999 biennium, as well as the medium-term plan for 1998-2001. Conference room papers containing the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 in detail, as well as proposed priorities and related information, and the medium-term plan for 1998-2001, will be before the Commission. The Commission will also have before it the relevant parts of the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1994-1995, as well as the relevant comments of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the plans of international organizations in statistics (E/CN.3/1997/27)

Note by the Secretary-General on the draft programme of work and medium-term plan of the United Nations Statistics Division (E/CN.3/1997/28)

Draft programme of work of the United Nations Statistics Division for the biennium 1998-1999 and related information (E/CN.3/1997/CRP.1)

Medium-term plan of the United Nations Statistics Division for the period 1998-2001 (E/CN.3/1997/CRP.2)

16. Provisional agenda for the thirtieth session of the Commission

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the Commission will have before it the provisional agenda for its thirtieth session, together with an indication of the documents to be submitted under each item and the legislative authority for their preparation.

Documentation

Draft provisional agenda for the thirtieth session of the Commission (E/CN.3/1997/L.3)

17. Report of the Commission on its twenty-ninth session

The Commission will adopt the report on its twenty-ninth session, which will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8 (E/1995/28), chaps. I and XVII.

2/ Ibid., para. 19.

3/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 5 (E/1991/25), paras. 216 and 219 (a).

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 6 (E/1993/26), para. 44.